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AN
APPENDIX
TO
OBSERVATIONS ON HAMLET;
BEING AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT
*SHAKSPEARE DESIGNED THAT TRAGEDY
AS AN INDIRECT CENSURE*
ON
Mary Queen of Scots.

CONTAINING

- I. Some Observations on Dramas, which professedly allude to the Occurrences and Characters of the times in which they were written, and an Answer to Objections brought against the Hypothesis.
- II. Some farther Arguments in support of it. And
- III. An Answer to the Objections brought against Dr. WARBURTON'S Hypothesis respecting an Allusion to MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS in the celebrated Passage in the Midsummer Night's Dream.

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A N
A P P E N D I X, &c.

NUMBER I.

Containing some Observations on Dramas, which professedly allude to the Occurrences and Characters of the Times in which they were written, and an Answer to Objections brought against the Hypothesis.

— Let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story.

HAMLET.

WHEN I wrote and published my OBSERVATIONS ON HAMLET, I executed my task with all the ardour of an enthusiast, and considered myself the happy discoverer of a new illustration of one of my great Master's most admired plays. Convinced of the truth of my hypothesis, I flattered myself that my readers would follow me through the flowery winding path, and not be displeased to find at the end of their short journey, that objects had been pointed out to their notice, which they had passed by
A unheeded.

unheeded. But, as in the great prospect of the world, so in the fairy regions of poetry and Shakspeare, some can discern objects at a greater distance than others, and others again “ will travel from Dan even to Beertheba, and cry—’Tis all barren! ”

When the awful moment of publication was past, the stern voice of criticism called upon the enthusiast to awake from his rapt vision, and reconsider it with reason and with coolness. I received the remarks of my friends with pleasure, and paid them the attention which learning and friendship demand. The strictures of professed critics next appeared, and I weighed all their objections with candour. Yet, after all that has been said against my hypothesis, and at the end of more than a year after it’s publication, during which time I have frequently reconsidered it, so far am I from altering my first opinion, that every fresh perusal of the play has offered fresh matter for conviction to my own mind, and furnished me with many new arguments for the establishment of my hypothesis. Nor have I heard any objections brought against it, which are not, to my judgement, easily answered.

Of the arguments already adduced some think that “ No two stories appear more remote from each other than those of Gertrude and Mary ; ”——They say,

’tis but our phantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of them.

Others

Others think them “ Calculated only to remind the reader of captain Fluellen’s proofs of the resemblance between Macedon and Monmouth,” and others again think that, “ Had Shakspeare designed to exhibit the play of Hamlet as an allusion to the history of Mary, he would have given to the characters of Gertrude, Claudius and old Hamlet, many more features of resemblance to Mary, Bothwell and Lord Darnley than he has actually done.”

To those who see no resemblance between the stories of Gertrude and Mary, I confess I have not any farther arguments to bring forward stronger than those already adduced; but to those who only doubt, I will offer an explanation of what appears difficult, and some farther arguments to establish their belief:

Therefore I have entreated them along
 With me to watch the *minutes* of this *play*;
 That, when again this apparition come,
 They may approve their eyes and speak to it.

If we consider the nature of some of those dramas which professedly have a reference to the occurrences and characters of the times in which they were written, we shall find, that it is not the way with Dramatists to adhere very minutely to the circumstances attached to the history or character to which they wish to allude; but to introduce a few striking features to constitute the likeness.

There are many allusions in Shakspeare's plays to the transactions of the times in which they were written, and which have enabled modern critics to ascertain the dates of them with very great plausibility, if not certainty. These may be best seen by referring to the Notes, but more particularly to Mr. Malone's "Attempt to ascertain the Chronological Order of Shakspeare's Plays."

In King John there is perhaps an allusion to the Spanish armament in 1596, and another to the Bull published by the Pope against Elizabeth. In Henry the Eighth, to the accession of James the First, in Measure for Measure, to the reserved conduct of James towards his subjects, and in Macbeth the execution of Cawdor is said to allude to the death of the Earl of Essex. In these we find, that, wherever the nature and similarity of the story admits of it, the Poet takes advantage of the opportunity, and, without going out of his way at all, or by shaping his story but a little, he makes the events of a former period apply to the present, and vice versa. The effect of such allusions every one must have felt who has attended much at theatrical exhibitions: the audience seem to recognize the picture with one consent, and an universal *peal* of applause gives proof of the reality of the likenesses. A single sentence, or perhaps a word, may produce this effect. What person, who had formed his opinion of the character of Mary and her actions from the misrepresentations of Elizabeth and her

her party, could fail to acknowledge a likeness when the Player Queen repeated "*None WED the SECOND, but who KILLED the FIRST?*" Any one recollecting her story, by applauding the line, would apprise the audience that there was something remarkable in it, and bring to their recollection the person and circumstance alluded to; thus the impression would be indelibly stamped.

Of Dramas written *professedly* with a reference to the occurrences and characters of their times, my small knowledge of dramatic history furnishes me with no one prior to the year 1702, when Rowe produced his TAMERLANE; the hero of which, in his dedication to the Marquis of Hartington, he acknowledges, in indirect terms, to be a picture of King William¹.
The

¹ "Some people (who do me a very great honour in it) have fancied, that in the person of Tamerlane, I have alluded to the greatest character of the present age. I do not know whether I ought not to apprehend a great deal of danger from avowing a design like that. It may be a task, indeed, worthy the greatest genius, which this, or any other time, has produced; but therefore I ought not to stand the shock of a 'parallel, lest it should be seen, to my disadvantage, how far the hero has transcended the Poet's thought. There are many features, 'tis true, in that great man's life, not unlike his Majesty; his courage, his piety, his moderation, his justice, and his fatherly love of his people; but above all, his hate of tyranny and oppression, and his zealous care for the common good of mankind, carry a large resemblance of him. Several incidents are alike in these stories; and there wants nothing
to

The furious Bajazet therefore must be his great antagonist Lewis the Fourteenth. Rowe, in the plot, has not been very anxious to mould it much to his second design, and the likeness is intended, rather in the two characters of Tamerlane and Bajazet, than in the incidents in which they are concerned. "The virtues of Tamerlane, (Dr. Johnson observes²) seem to have been arbitrarily assigned him by his Poet, for I know not that history gives any other qualities to Tamerlane than those which make a conqueror. The fashion, however, of the time was, to accumulate upon Lewis all that can raise horror and detestation; and whatever good was withheld from him, that it might not be thrown away, was bestowed on King William." To particularize all the allusions to William, and shew how far they bear upon his character, would take me much beyond my design. It is sufficient to observe, that they consist rather in general than

to his Majesty, but such a deciding victory, as that by which Tamerlane gave peace to the world. That is yet to come; but I hope we may reasonably expect it, from the unanimity of the present parliament, and so formidable a force as that unanimity will give life and vigour to."

"If your Lordship can find any thing in this Poem, like a prince, who is justly the object of your Lordship's, and indeed of the world's veneration, I persuade myself it will prevail with you to forgive every thing else that you can find amiss."

Dedication to Tamerlane.

² Life of Rowe.

than in particular panegyric, attributing to William the virtues of a great prince and conqueror, such as he would have wished to be thought, rather than what he strictly was.

In the year 1713, Addison brought his CATO upon the stage. This was professedly a political and a party play, brought forwards by the Whigs, to rescue liberty from the danger, in which (as Dr. Johnson says) they *affected* to believe it stood. Yet nothing in the story has any immediate reference to the times³. The noble sentiments of liberty which breath throughout it, were as warmly applauded by Tories as by Whigs.

In 1763, Mallet produced his ELVIRA, and dedicated it to Lord Bute, then first Lord of the Treasury, and one of the principal actors in bringing about what was called the Scotch peace. This was looked upon as a political play⁴, applicable to the times, and accordingly met with much opposition from the opposition of the day. Yet in the story there are few incidents which bear at all upon the times, unless we suppose the quarrel between Pedro and

³ Lord Bolingbroke, who was present at the first representation, is said to have called Booth, who acted Cato, to his box, and gave him fifty guineas "for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual Dictator."

⁴ Vide Biographia Dramatica, Vol. ii. Article *Elvira*.

and Alonzo to allude to that between Frederic Prince of Wales and his father. But that event happened some years before (in 1737) and the Prince had been dead twelve years. The pacific sentiments, and the character of a monarch, who places his glory in cultivating the arts which flourish most in peace, and in securing the tranquillity and happiness of his subjects, are the only marks of reference to the times in the play.

In the same year was published the FALL OF MORTIMER, with a very severe dedication to Lord Bute, said to have been written by Mr. Wilkes, in which he applied the character of Mortimer to that minister. Ben Jonson had begun a play upon this subject, which his death prevented him from completing, and we have only his out-line of the play, and a small part of the first scene. In 1691, a play upon this subject, said to have been written by Mountfort, and called "King Edward the Third, with the fall of Mortimer Earl of March," was acted at the Theatre Royal and published. In 1731 it was altered and acted at the Haymarket, under the single title of "The Fall of Mortimer," but whether with a political view, or not, I cannot tell. Sir Robert Walpole was then prime minister, and had, of course, many enemies. I have not the original by me to compare the alterations. In the edition of 1763, however, printed from that of 1731, all the passages, which were thought to bear upon the minister, are
printed

printed in *Italics*; yet the alterations which are made in it are trifling, and those principally in the fifth act, and applicable to the state of a falling minister, Lord Bute, at that time, having resigned his place. These few alterations were thought sufficient for the purpose of conveying an indirect, yet obvious, censure.

I will instance but another Drama, and that of more modern date: the Tragedy of ENGLAND PRESERVED.

The story is taken from the history of England during the minority of Henry the Third. It was brought out in 1795. The quarrel and reconciliation between Earl William and his father, the Earl of Pembroke, is said to allude to an event which happened the same year between the first personages in this kingdom: this incident is the introduction of the author, not being found in the history. Though well acquainted with that event, I saw the play represented without applying it, and perhaps should not have discovered the allusion, had it not been pointed out to me^s; yet, when it was pointed out, I immediately acknowledged the likeness.

These instances are sufficient to show the manner in which authors dramatise particular characters and events, and the impression they make upon an audience or a reader.

When

^s Monthly Review, September, 1795.

When a story occurs to an author, parallel, even in a few circumstances, to one of modern times, which he wishes to dramatise, he avails himself of it, and introduces, sometimes only a few, sometimes more, circumstances to adapt it to his second design; while the audience, on their part, "give up the reins of their imagination into his hands," are carried along with him, and give their approbation and sanction to the likeness. But, where the story is too barren of circumstances, or he wishes to make it bear more upon his second design, or to introduce any particular incident or circumstance attached to his modern characters, he departs from his original, and inserts circumstances and incidents of his own. In doing this, particularly if he is an author who does not greatly study correctness, we are not to be surprised, if, whilst his imagination is at work upon two, and in some respects different, stories, that he should sometimes fall into mistakes and inconsistencies: in following his second design, he departs in some measure, and perhaps involuntarily, from his first. This is what, I think, we should constantly keep in mind, in considering the present play. Inconsistencies there certainly are in it, which, by my hypothesis, and keeping the two stories in mind, are, in my judgment, plausibly, and surely very probably, accounted for: it is but reasonable then to suppose the hypothesis to be true. And, if there are sufficient characteristics to fix a resemblance, we are not to be surprised that there are not more. This consideration will obviate an objection
made

made against this hypothesis, and against two lines, spoken by the Player Queen, which I consider as tending very strongly in it's favour:

In second husband let me be accurst!

None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.

Against this it is objected, that Mary married her third husband when she married Bothwell. She certainly did. But in the history, whence Shakspeare took the plot, the Queen married only her second, and he could not alter it to her third, without making it too palpable, and indeed not without putting it beyond the possibility of a doubt upon the subject. Her first husband she had married and lived with entirely in France; he had been dead some time; that marriage had no connection whatever with the incidents of this part of her story, and her marriage with Lord Darnley being the first with which the Scotch and English were personally connected, every one would understand it sufficiently to answer the poet's purpose.

THE IMPOLICY of such an allusion is next objected to my hypothesis. "That Shakspeare would not venture to meddle in affairs of state, and, however pleasing it might be to Elizabeth, to James it could not be very grateful." The statement of a few facts will, I trust, sufficiently obviate this objec-

tion. If the allusion is clearly made out, the impolicy of it cannot overturn it ; and, if it is not so, merely probable motives for it will not establish it. Motives for such an allusion will strengthen the probability ; but the impolicy, where the allusion is evident, will not overturn it. I trust, however, that I shall shew Shakspeare to have been acting conformable to the manners of his time, and not in a very impolitic way towards his own interest.

Shakspeare most probably removed from Stratford upon Avon to London between the years 1585 and 1588. In Nov. 1589, (the year in which he began to write for the stage) the privy council appointed assessors to join with the master of the revels, to consider such plays as were to be performed, as the players " had taken upon them to handle in their plays certain matters of divinity and state unfit to be suffered." *Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-Papers*, p. 483. In 1592, Shakspeare produced his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which he paid a compliment to Elizabeth, and another to Mary Queen of Scots ; but whether unmixed, or allayed by satire is uncertain. We find (*Apol.* p. 64, 5, 6.) that Shakspeare was not in favour at court at that time ; and, as his compliments (and censure, if there is any) were paid in such indirect terms, he had nothing to hope or fear in consequence. After this period, he paid his court to Elizabeth by addressing to her his very justly-admired Sonnets. (*Vide Apol.* p. 41, &c.)

&c.) We are not to wonder then, if, in 1596, we find him still farther paying court to her, by representing on the stage, though under a veil, her injured rival Mary Queen of Scots, whom Elizabeth pursued with implacable and unremitted hatred, as the murderer of her husband, a crime which Elizabeth had imputed to her, and the handle by which she inflicted her cruelties upon her.

From James's displeasure Shakspeare had nothing, at this time, to apprehend. Elizabeth was then sixty-three years of age, but in full health and vigour, and likely to live many years. Her death indeed followed in 1603, but it was expedited much by the grief which, as some say, she felt for the ingratitude and death of the Earl of Essex, and by her rejection of all consolation and relief in her sorrows. But it is probable, and to be hoped, that the remorse of her own conscience for her accumulated guilt, and her injustice to Mary, had it's part in this affliction. But, be that as it may, she carefully avoided any inquiry into, or recognition of the right of succession, and would not, till her death approached very near, acknowledge James as her successor to the throne.

Had Shakspeare, however, looked forward to it, and considered his succession as certain, there might yet remain a doubt in his mind, whether James would be greatly displeased at it. He had certainly neglected to revenge the murder of his mother, and had not
always,

always, during her life, treated her with the respect and filial duty, which every son owes to his mother. Mary's greatest calumniator, Buchanan, was his preceptor, and was greatly favoured by him. There are also different opinions respecting the character of the Queen in the play. To me it appears beyond a doubt, that she is represented as *as art and part* (the phrase applied to Mary) in the murder of her husband; yet there are others who think she is represented as innocent. If so, why might it not strike James in the same light? And, if the character of Hamlet was intended for him, it was a parallel he could not be very greatly offended at, as it must have appeared highly complimentary, to him. Upon this parallel I shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter.

A conjecture which I ventured in my "Observations," (p. 42) respecting the difference in the two editions of 1602 and 1604, may give some farther probability to my arguments.

At that time, however, the poets and players were not very scrupulous respecting the subjects they exhibited on the stage, and a man might perhaps pay a compliment to one, from whom he expected advancement, when no fears of displeasure would restrain him from censuring his superiors; for, "in December 1604, the King's players (the company to which Shakspeare belonged) brought upon the stage the TRAGEDY OF GOWRY; introducing the real actors, which

which was attended *with exceeding concourse of all sorts of people*; and which was followed by the displeasure of *some great counsellors*. From exhibiting recent transactions, the comedians went on to represent on the stage *the whole of the present time.*" (Apol. p. 487.)



A FRIEND, who is inclined to think the Queen innocent of the murder of her husband, argues, "That she is not moved in the least at the play which Hamlet causes to be represented before her, but seems surprized at the discomposure of the King. Had she been an accomplice, she would, in all probability, have tried, like Lady Macbeth, to make her husband sit out the piece, and not betray his disorder. They never once, when alone, mention the subject; which, had the Queen been guilty, Shakspeare would naturally have made them to do. The King, in his soliloquy, seems to take the whole guilt upon himself. The Queen considers Hamlet's seeing the Ghost as the coinage of his own brain, whereas, had she been guilty, she would have expressed the greater fear, and almost have thought she saw the Ghost herself."

So far am I from considering the Queen's composure at the representation of the play as a circumstance in her favour, that I look upon it as a proof of her criminality. Had she been innocent of the murder herself,

herself, and ignorant of the guilt of Claudius, the representation of the play, and the King's behaviour in consequence, would have discovered it to her, and affected her in the strongest manner. But, as she shews no emotion, she either was accessary to it at the time, or consented to it afterwards. But, even supposing this to be inconclusive, how are we to get over her not breaking with Claudius and upbraiding him with his villainy after it is discovered? She is alone with him at the beginning of the fourth act, but is silent as to the murder of her former husband.*

Her

* The Queen seems perfectly aware of the design of the play :

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.—

You have offended Claudius, your father-in-law,
by discovering and exposing his part in the murder
of the late King.

Hamlet. Mother, *you* have my father much offended.—

You have offended my own father and your first
husband, by consenting to his murder.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Come, come, you answer too much at random,
and in a manner I cannot bear.

Hamlet. Go, go, you question with a *wicked* tongue.

Queen. * * * *

Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

I must have you silenced, you know too much,
and must not be suffered to blab.

Hamlet. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen.

Her composure, therefore, at the representation of the play, is owing to her having become hardened in her guilt,

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

Why should she fear his murdering her, but to avenge the murder of his father, which he had discovered, and to have her "blood for blood?"

The whole of Hamlet's first soliloquy, particularly the latter part, appears to me to contain insinuations of this nature against the Queen in her marriage with Claudius:

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her gauled eyes,
She marry'd! — O most wicked speed! to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets?
It is not, nor it cannot come to, good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue!

Again:

My father's spirit! in arms! all is not well.
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my foul. Foul deeds will rise,
(Though all the earth o'erwhelm them) to men's eyes.

As Hamlet had been charged by the Ghost "However he pursued his revenge, not to taint his mind, nor let his soul contrive against his mother aught, but to leave her to heaven, and to the thorns in her own bosom;" He might think indirect charges sufficient to let her know that he was acquainted with her crime, and, as he was to reclaim, not to punish, her, it was better not to make a more open accusation.

guilt,⁷ to which Hamlet seems to allude in the closet scene which follows the play:

Peace, sit you down,
And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Act 3. S. 4.

Nor

⁷ The difference in the effect this play has upon the King and the Queen is very remarkable. After the conversation between the Player King and his Queen, which is so applicable to Claudius and Gertrude, and which Hamlet himself says is *worm-wood*, Claudius begins to suspect that "there is offence in it," while the Queen replies to Hamlet's question of, "Madam how like you this play?" "The Lady doth protest too much, methinks," a kind of excuse for herself. It certainly is not conscious innocence which gives the Queen this composure; for at any rate, the *suspicion* incurred by a second marriage, and the guilt of her incest, which her high station alone secured from punishment, had been laid open to her, and must reproach her conscience. And when Hamlet afterwards says, "You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife," and the King is alarmed, (as she ought also to have been, had this play, and the King's alarm, first discovered this black deed to her) she is anxious only for him, and asks, "How fares my Lord?" But when she is retired to her closet, from the eyes of the court and the players, she gives way to her "most great affliction of spirit," which this discovery had occasioned, and sends for her son to question him; upon his behaving roughly, she fears lest he should revenge the murder upon her, and prepares to *silence him*: "*I'll set those to you that can speak.*"

Nor do I consider her situation as at all parallel with that of Lady Macbeth. The two characters are very different. Lady Macbeth is of an aspiring and masculine spirit, and the crimes to which she is accessory are to gratify her ambition. Gertrude is more soft and feminine, and the crimes into which she is betrayed proceed from love, though that love is of a gross and perverted nature; and, though possessing sufficient calmness not to betray herself, she might be deficient in that greater degree of it, which would be necessary to enable her to sooth the agitation of another, with whom she was an associate in wickedness. They certainly do not mention the subject when alone together after the play. Conscious guilt would prevent them. Their sole attention seems to be directed against Hamlet, who having slain Polonius, mistaking him for the King, Claudius says to the Queen:

His liberty is full of threats to all,
To you yourself, to us, to every one.

* * * *

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence.

Act 4. S. 1.

To this the Queen does not object. If Shakspeare meant to represent his Queen as innocent, he surely should have taken care to put it beyond a doubt; that he has not done so, is certain. The King does

not accuse her, nor mention her as an accessary in his soliloquy; but he does not clear her character, and assert her innocence. Nor is the situation of the Ghost in the closet scene, similar to that of Banquo in the banquet scene in Macbeth. In Hamlet he appears to the person to whom he has charged the avengement of his murder. In Macbeth he appears to his murderer. In both scenes the Queen is on the stage, but does not see him. Yet both Queens were, as I think, privy to the murder. Gertrude, I have endeavoured to prove, was, if not consenting to it at the time, certainly not displeased at it afterwards. Lady Macbeth could not be ignorant of the design of Macbeth to murder Banquo,³ and by not preventing it, she became an accessary.

³ Macb. Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

Lady. But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

Macb. There's comfort yet, they are assailable;

Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown

His cloistered flight, &c.

there shall be done

A deed of dreadful note.

Lady. What's to be done?

Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,

Till thou applaud the deed. Come, sealing night, &c.

Things, bad begun, make strong themselves by ill.

Act 3. S. 2.

After this Lady Macbeth could not but know that Banquo was to be murdered that night.

IT is also objected that " If Shakspeare had thought proper to have censured Mary, he would have sent his play into the world much sooner, and not have waited an interval of so many years, when, in the bustle of the events of those times, the matter would be old on men's minds, or forgotten."

What I have before remarked respecting the supposed impolicy of the allusion, may be repeated here with effect. If the allusion is clear, we have little concern with the date in establishing it. As to the matter being old on men's minds or forgotten, I believe that never to have been the case during the life of Elizabeth. She never suffered her malice to sleep, in pursuing to ruin either the person or fame of her rival. Nor was the interval very long. Shakspeare did not, as we know, begin to write for the stage till 1589. Mary was beheaded in 1587, and the old play of Hamlett, which Mr. Malone supposes to have been written by Kyd, was produced before 1589. Of this play, unfortunately, no copy is known to be extant. It would, I make no doubt, throw much light on my hypothesis. Kyd might write with the same ideas as I attribute to Shakspeare, and Shakspeare might re-write both his literal and implied meaning. Let it be remembered however that there is no *proof* that this was not Shakspeare's play, and that Mr. Malone fixes the date only to 1596, or before. But, at any rate, the date of this play is only nine years after the death of Mary. Who can think

think this a late period for Shakspeare's interesting himself either way in her story, when, at the distance of two centuries, her cause has been argued on both sides with as much warmth, as if the unfortunate Queen had been endeared to our memories by a personal knowledge of her gentle and insinuating manners, on the one hand, or the minds of her adversaries warped on the other, by the bitter calumnies of Elizabeth? and, whilst we have daily modern instances of authors going out of their way to express their sentiments upon all subjects; when a petty novel or a poem are not exempt from the stains of party and prejudice, we need not wonder at seeing Shakspeare giving his sentiments upon the actions of Mary Queen of Scots in his immortal tragedy of Hamlet.

I CANNOT close my answer to the remarks which have been made upon my OBSERVATIONS without noticing one, of rather a peculiar nature, which has been brought against them: That it is "unlikely that I should have found out an intention in Shakspeare which no other person ever suspected, and yet which must have been pretty strongly marked to produce any effect."

It is very far from my intention to arrogate to myself any superior degree of penetration from this discovery; I was led to it by a lucky, but a natural chance.

chance. I sat down to read Hume's History of England, with the intention of digressing to other authors upon some controverted points. When I had finished the reign of Henry the Seventh, I turned aside to Walpole's Historic Doubts, in which he considers the Winter's Tale as an indirect apology for Anne Boleyn. I next proceeded in Hume to the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and then again turned aside to Tytler's Inquiry. With the Play of Hamlet I had long and intimately been acquainted, having, whilst at school, performed a part in it; having often seen it acted, and having read it over again while employed in my historical studies. Thus were the ideas of Shakspeare and historical allusions in play-writing, Hamlet, Mary Queen of Scots, and the gross calumnies circulated against her all brought to my mind at one time. This train of reading naturally led to it; yet it is a train which no one perhaps had before followed precisely in the same order. The allusion struck me very forcibly at first; but my implicit assent to it was for some time suspended by the reflection, that Dr. Warburton, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone, all able critics and historians, and who had published editions of our author's Works, (besides many other very able commentators) had passed it over unnoticed. But when I again considered, that scarce a commentator had started up, at any distance of time, even after the most able critics, without adding some little to the elucidation of his author, either by his own peculiar cast of reading, or his local

or

or professional knowledge, and noticed something which had escaped the observation of others, I believed it might nevertheless be true, and felicitated myself upon so lucky a discovery. Dr. Warburton discovered what had escaped the observation of Rowe, Pope, Theobald and Hanmer, who had noticed the allusion to Elizabeth; Lord Orford discovered another allusion, which had escaped the observation of all these critics, and Dr. Johnson and Mr. Steevens besides; and, though far inferior in point of knowledge to my predecessors, chance may have given me an advantage, which their learning might fail to confer.



NUMBER

N U M B E R I I.

CONTAINING

*SOME FARTHER PROOFS IN SUPPORT OF
THE HYPOTHESIS.*

IN my OBSERVATIONS, p. 43, I said, I made no doubt much more might be brought in favour of my hypothesis, were I to search after arguments; but that I was little read in the books of that period; and thought sufficient time and labour had already been bestowed upon the subject. At that time, I must confess, I flattered myself I should find few dissenters from my hypothesis, and I entered into it so fully as I did, with a view to say every thing which occurred to me upon the subject, rather than leave it to be supplied by another. I had no idea that all the coincidences I had adduced would leave many in the same opinion they entertained before they read the book. Nor did I imagine that greater evidence was wanted, yet, if required, such strong and various

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proofs

proofs appeared to me to be contained throughout the Play, that the history of Mary Queen of Scots was very deeply impressed upon the Poet's mind, that I was confident it could easily be obtained. The following coincidences are what have struck me in the course of my reading during the last year, not solely with a view to this object, but in a re-perusal of Hamlet, Dr. Robertson's History, and Mr. Tytler's Inquiry, and in making occasional references to other authors¹.

THE

¹ I have lately been favoured with a perusal of the b. l. History of Hamlet. The only copy of this scarce tract I believe now extant, is amongst the collection of books left by Mr. Capel to Trinity College library. Such are the restrictions under which he left them, that it is impossible to procure a copy, or I should have been happy to have re-printed it for the use of the admirers of Shakspeare. I was, however, permitted to make pretty copious extracts, which it was my intention to have printed in this appendix; but as they are not in general very material to my subject, and would have taken up many pages in an appendix, which, without them, will exceed the length of the original publication, I shall content myself with noticing such particulars only, as strike me to be to the immediate purpose, when the passages to which they belong occur. I must say in general then, that the perusal of this History has given me no cause whatever to alter my opinion of the play and the deviations I have noticed from the original history; but, on the contrary, it has afforded me, if possible, a fuller conviction of the truth of my hypothesis. I moreover think, that this History must necessarily have brought Mary Queen of Scots to the Poet's mind,

THE passage in p. 12. of my Observations respecting the scene of action of the play, should stand thus:

“ He

mind, as a *Queen of Scots* is mentioned in it (as also in the Chronicle, and which I ought to have noticed in my former Work) whom Hamlet married, and who likewise conspired against him and married his murderer.

“ The King of *Englands* wife being dead not long before, (although he cared not for marrying an other woman) desired his sonne in lawe to make a voyage for him into *Scotland* flattering him in such sort, that he made him beleieve that his singular wisdom caused him to preferre him to that ambassage, assuring himselfe that it were impossible that *Hamlet* the subtillest and wisest prince in the worlde should take any thing in the world in hand without effecting the same. Now the queen of *Scots* beeing a maid and of a haughty courage, despised marriage with al men, as not esteeming any worthy to be her companion, in such manner that by reason of this arrogant opinion there never came any man to desire her love but she caused him to loose his life: but the *Danish* kings fortune was so good that *Hermetrude* (for so was the queens name,) hearing that *Hamlet* was come thither to intreat a marriage between her and the king of *England*, forgot all her pride, and dispoiling herselfe of her sterne nature, being as then determined to make him (being the greatest prince as then living) her husband, and deprive the *English* princeesse of her spouse whome shee thought fit for no men but herself, and so this *Amazon* without love, disdaining *Cupid*, by her free wil submitted her haughtie mind to her concupiscence.” CHAP. VII.

“ The disloyall queene, had already provided herselfe of a marriage, to put her husband out of trouble and care for that: who perceiving him to be sad for her sake, when shee should have absented her selfe from him, she to blind him the more, and to

“ He has also removed the scene from Jutland to Elfineur in Zealand, as, no doubt, that place was uppermost in his mind; the Son of his Queen having married a Princess from that country.”

The b. l. Hyſtorie makes Horuendile governour of the province of *Ditmarſe*. Ditmarſe is in Lower Saxony in Germany, ſo that, if Shakspeare took his plot from this hyſtorie, my former obſervation on the alteration of the ſcene of action ſtill holds good,

incourage him to ſet forward on his owne deſtruction, promiſed to follow him whether ſoever he went, and to take the like fortune that befell to him, were it good or evil, and that ſo ſhe would give him cauſe to know, how much ſhee ſurpaſſed the *English woman* in her affection towards him: ſaying, that woman is accuſed that feareth to follow and accompany her husband to the death: ſo that to heare her ſpeake, men ſhould have ſayd that ſhee had been the wife of *Mithridates*, or *Zenobia* queene of *Palmyra* ſhee made ſo greate a ſhow of love and conſtancy: But by the effect it was after eaſily perceived, howe vaine the promiſe of this inconstant and wavering Princeſſe was: and howe uncomparable the life of this *Scottiſh* Queene was to the vigor of her chaſtitye, being a mayd before ſhe was married. For that *Hamlet* had no ſooner entered into the field, but ſhe found meanes to ſee *Wiglere*, and the battel begun, wherein the miſerable *Daniſh* Prince was ſlaine: but *Hermetrude* preſently yeelded herſelf with all her dead husbands treaſons into the hand of the Tyrant: who more then content with that metamorphoſis ſo much deſired, gave order, that preſently the marriage (bought with the blood and treaſon of the ſonne of *Horuendile*) ſhould bee celebrated.” CHAP. VIII.

IN page 15. article 1. beginning at p. 14, I have noticed the adulterous connection of the Queen with Claudius before the death of Hamlet's father, as if I considered it as a proof of her being concerned in the murder, when connected with other passages in the play which obscurely hint at it².

A passage in Mr. Tytler's Inquiry, wherein he is speaking of the letters forged in Mary's and Bothwell's names, and brought forward by the rebels against her, will equally apply to the point in question and give force to it.

“ The letters (says Dr. Robertson) contain only imperfect hints and obscure intimations with respect to the murder. Let this be granted. As a leading step, however, to the murder, the Confederates accused the Queen of a criminal intercourse with Bothwell: that being once established, the imperfect obscure hints in the Letters, as to the murder, become perfect, clear, and luminous. The adultery is a proof of the murder; it is the key to unfold, to explain, the imperfect

² There is not the smallest doubt but that Geruth in the history was not accessory to the murder of her husband. Hamlet never hints, even in the most indirect terms, that he suspected her; and she, in very direct terms, exculpates herself. The interview between Geruth and her son is the best part of the history, but too long for insertion here, especially as parts of it have already been given in the extracts of Dr. Farmer, Mr. Capel and Mr. Malone.

perfect hints; and what from the Letters, when taken *per se*, were only presumptions, now become clear proof against her as to the murder."

Vol. i. p. 250.

IN addition to the article (p. 15, 16.) respecting the murder of the King, and the greater resemblance it bears to the account of the murder of Lord Darnley, than to that of Horwendillus in the chronicle, I have a very extraordinary coincidence to produce³.

Dr. Robertson

³ To show how entirely Shakspeare has departed from the account of the murder of Horuendile in the hystorie, I will subjoin the whole of the passage, and leave the reader to draw his own conclusion from it. He will find that my extract differs from one given by Mr. Malone from the same Chapter. Shakspeare, Vol. ix. p. 331, Mr. Malone has omitted one part of a sentence, and inserted another from a different place: my extract is, I believe, more correct.

"Fengon having secretly assembled certain men, and perceiving himself strong enough to execute his enterprize, *Horuendile*, his brother being at a banquet with his friends, sodainely set upon him, where he slewe him as traiterously, as cunningly he purged himself of so detestable a murther to his subjects: for that before he had any violent or bloody handes, or once committed parricide upon his brother, hee had incestuously abused his wife, whose honour hee ought as well to have fought and procured, as traiterously he pursued and effected his destruction: and it is most certaine, that the
man

Dr. Robertson (in his History of Scotland, Vol. i. p. 405.) speaking of the illness of Lord Darnley a short

man that abandoneth himselfe to any notorious and wicked action, whereby he becommeth a sinner, hee careth not to commit much more haynous and abominable offences, and covered his boldness and wicked practise with so great subtiltie and policie, and under a vaile of meere simplicitie, that beeing favoured for the honest love that he bare to his sister in lawe, for whose sake he affirmed, he had in that sort murdered his brother, that his sinne found excuse among the common people, and of the nobilitie was esteemed for justice: for that *Geruth* being as courteous a Princess, as any then living in the North parts, and one that had never once so much as offended any of her subjects, either commons, or courtiers; this adulterer and infamous murtherer, slandered his dead brother, that hee would have slaine his wife, and that hee by chaunce finding him upon the point ready to doe it, in defence of the Lady had slaine him, bearing off the blows, which as then he struck at the innocent Princeesse; without any other cause of malice whatsoever: wherein he wanted no false witnesses to approve his act, which deposed in like sort, as the wicked calumniator himselfe protested, being the same persons that had born him company, and were participants of his treason, so that instead of pursuing him as a parricide, and an incestuous person, al the courtiers admired and flattered him in his good fortune: making more account of false witnesses and detestable wicked reporters, and more honouring the calumniators, than they esteemed of those that seeking to call the matter in question, and admiring the vertues of the murdered Prince would have punished the massacrers and bereavers of his life. Which was the cause that *Fengon*, boldened and encouraged by such impunitie, durst venture to couple himselfe in marriage with her, whom hee used as his Concubine during good *Horuendiles* life; in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, and charging his conscience with abominable guilt and two fold impietie

short time before his death, and that it was imputed to the effects of poison; adds in a note: "Buchanan and Knox are positive that the King had been poisoned. They mention the black and PUTRID PUSTULES *which broke out all over his body* ⁴."

This is the very account which the Ghost gives of his having been poisoned:

Upon

as incestuous adulterie, and paracide murther; and that the unfortunate and wicked woman that had received the honour to bee the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest princes in the North, imbased herselfe in such vile sort as to falsifie her faith unto him, and, which is worse, to marrie him that had beene the tyrannous murtherer of her lawful husband; which made diverse men think that she had beene the causer of the murther, thereby to live in her adulterie without controle. But where shall a man finde a more wicked and bolde woman, than a great parsonage, once having loosed the bands of honor and honestie: This Princeesse who at the first, for her rare vertues and courtesies was honored of al men, and beloved of her husband, as soone as she once gave eare to the tyrant *Fengon*, forgot both the ranke she helde amongst the greatest dames, and the dutie of an honest wife on her behalfe."

CHAP. I.

* I have not had an opportunity of consulting Knox. Buchanan's words are: "Blew pustules arose all over his body, with so much pain and torment, that there was little hope of his life." He says before "The poison wrought *sooner*, than those, who gave it, supposed it would." History of Scotland, Translation 1690. p. 186.

Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
 And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment; whose effect
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
 That, swift as quick-silver, it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body;
 And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
 And a most instant TETTER bark'd about,
 Most lazar-like, with vile and LOATHSOME CRUST,
 All my smooth body.

Act I. S. 5.

IN p. 23, 24, I have noticed the Queen's *haste* to marry the murderer of her husband, and Hamlet's reproach to her for not observing the decent custom of mourning on these occasions.

A passage from Buchanan, and some farther extracts from the Play give weight to my hypothesis.

“ The Queen, mean while, looked very demurely, and, dissembling great sorrow, thought that way to reconcile the people to her; but that speeded as ill with her, as the rest of the conspiracy. For, whereas it was the custom, time out of mind, for Queens, after their husband's death, to abstain several days,

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not

not only from the sight of men, but even from seeing the light, she indeed *personated a fain'd grief*, but her joy did so exceed it, that, though the doors were shut, yet the windows were open, and casting off her mourning weeds, in four days, she could well enough bear the sight of the sun and air: and before twelve days were over, her mind was harden'd against the talks of the people, and she went to Seton, about seven miles from the town, Bothwell never departing from her side, * * * * and she went daily abroad to the accustomed sports." p. 192.

A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears:—why she, even she,—
O Heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer,——

* * * *

Within a month;
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She marry'd.

Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,——
With one auspicious and one dropping eye;
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife.

Act 1. S. 2.

IN

IN p. 31, I have noticed Hamlet's delaying to revenge his father's murder, and a resemblance it bears to James's conduct in a similar situation. A farther investigation of the subject has not only convinced me of this, but also that Shakspeare had James very much in his mind throughout the character of Hamlet.

The character of Hamlet is not, like most other heroes of the stage, an exemplification of one or two particular passions, but a compound of many; and, in some measure, of seemingly opposite passions and qualities⁵. "An exceeding high elevation of soul, an exquisite sensibility to virtue and vice, and an extreme gentleness of spirit and sweetness of disposition," are eminently conspicuous. "With these are conjoined the most brilliant and cultivated talents, an imagination transcendentally vivid and strong, together with what may be called, rather an *intuition*, than an acquired

⁵ This character of Hamlet is taken from "An Essay on the Character of Hamlet. By the Reverend Mr. Thomas Robertson, F R S. Edinb and Minister of Dalmeny." Printed in the second volume of the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. I have followed his character of Hamlet, rather than drawn one myself; because his appears to me to be so very just, and superior to any thing I could myself have written; and a character drawn by myself might have had the appearance of being forced to my own designs. For the same reasons I have followed Mr. Hume in his character of James.

acquired knowledge of mankind. And there may be added still, a singular gaiety of spirits, which hardly at any after period, the very gloomiest only excepted, seems to have failed him." p. 254. "He was at once a polished gentleman, a soldier, a scholar and a philosopher; as in the exclamation of Ophelia :

O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !

The courtier's, soldier's,⁶ scholar's, eye, tongue, sword.

At one time, mild, courteous and contemplative; at another, animated with the keenest feelings; upon occasions, all wrath and fire; looking down, at all times, as if from a superior orb, upon whatever was little, insincere or base among men." p. 255.

"In such an assemblage of qualities, combining to form the broad character of Hamlet, Shakspeare appears to have seen, that they were balanced in such an opposite manner, that one class of them should counteract, and render inefficient the other. It is this that suffered nothing to be done; it is this that constantly impeded the action, and kept the catastrophe back. Resentment, revenge, eternal indignation, stimulated Hamlet at one moment; at the next,

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⁶ I have before observed (p. 43.) that it does not appear, that Hamlet was a soldier, but only a student at Wittenberg; and that, in this passage, Shakspeare, in complimenting James, forgot the inconsistency it gave to Hamlet's character.

we have the mere unbending and recoil of these passions; and not only this, which was transient, but there followed, almost at the same instant, that gentleness which so seldom left him. From this, he could not, at any time, act in cold blood; he could strike only in the fiercest moments of provocation; then ‘could he drink hot blood!’ In the general tenor of his mind he could do nothing; he was like Samson, when his strength was gone from him.”

“Meanwhile, he is almost constantly chiding himself for *dull mettle, dull revenge, want of gall*; a self-reproach, which, in some scenes, breaks vividly out; as upon the occasions where he saw a mere player weeping over Hecuba, and when he was told that the delicate Prince Fortinbras was marching at the head of his troops to risk his life for an “egg-shell.” Hamlet, in short, was not formed for action. Upon the fluctuation of his mind between contriving and executing, between elevation, sensibility and greatness, hangs the whole business of the Tragedy.” p. 256.

“To the principles of morality and a consummate knowledge of mankind, he joined the accomplishments of learning and the graces of life. His eloquence was such as great orators only have possessed, rich, tropical, daring, ardent, vehement. The directions he gives to the players, are models of taste and laws for the stage. His wit and fancy seem to have belonged only to himself. Even in his character
of

of foldier and hero, and which I all along confider as his weaker part, an intrepidity breaks forth at times beyond what is human; as appears in the Ghost-scenes, where his courage grows with danger; where he is not only untterrified, but sports with what appals the reft of mankind." p. 263.

To this may be added the dutiful affections of a fon, and the glowing ardour of friendship which are fo conspicuous throughout the piece.

His love for his father is represented in the moft beautiful and pathetic manner in two words, far beyond what the moft laboured poetry could have conveyed:

Ghoft. If thou didft ever thy dear father love,——

Hamlet. O Heaven!——

His love for his mother is no lefs remarkable. As his mother, he fhews her all the affection and duty which any fon can fhew towards a parent; yet, as ſhe has diſhonoured herſelf by being acceſſary to the murder of his father, and an inceſtuous marriage with his uncle, his hatred of vice, his diſappointed affections and former good opinion of her, kindle the higheſt indignation and reſentment, and the interpoſition of the Ghoſt was not perhaps without juſt apprehenſions, to prevent him from contriving againſt her.

The

The character of James, as drawn by Mr. Hume, will appear, in very many respects, extremely like that of Hamlet.

“ No Prince, so little enterprizing and so inoffensive, was ever so much exposed to the opposite extremes of calumny and flattery, of satire and panegyric.” “ Many virtues, however, it must be owned, he was possessed of ; but no one of them pure, or free from the contagion of the neighbouring vices. His generosity bordered on profusion, his learning on pedantry, his pacific disposition on pusillanimity, his wisdom on cunning, his friendship on light fancy and boyish fondness.” “ His capacity was considerable ; but fitter to discourse on general maxims than to conduct any intricate business : his intentions were just ; but more adapted to the conduct of private life, than to the government of kingdoms. Awkward in his person, and ungainly in his manners, he was ill qualified to command respect ; partial and undiscerning in his affections, he was little fitted to acquire general love. Of a feeble temper more than of a frail judgment : Exposed to our ridicule from his vanity ; but exempt from our hatred by his freedom from pride and arrogance. And upon the whole, it may be pronounced of his character, that all his qualities were sullied with weakness, and embellished by humanity. Political courage he certainly was devoid of ; and from thence chiefly is derived the strong

strong prejudice which prevails against his personal bravery: An inference, however, which must be owned, from general experience, to be extremely fallacious." "He never discovered any tendency, even the smallest, towards a passion for any mistress."

Vol. i. p. 114. Quart. Edit.

In comparing these two characters the advantage is on the side of Hamlet; and Dr. Robertson has certainly drawn his character in a very favourable manner; but a Poet, in drawing the character of one, whom, from real regard, or from motives of policy, he intends to compliment, will naturally soften the darker shades, and make the character rather what he wishes, than what it is in reality. The character of Hamlet is the character of James; but it is a flattering likeness; it is James drawn in the fairest colours; his harsh features softened, and his deformities concealed: We say it is like; but it is too well-looking⁷.

The conduct of James towards his mother is very similar to that of Hamlet. He never appears to have been deficient in personal duty and affection, but the character in which she was represented to him, and the political situations in which their respective circumstances

⁷ Even Shakspeare himself at one time forgets that his hero is "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," and mentions him as "fat and scant of breath."

cumstances placed them, occasioned differences equally distressing to both³.

His conduct likewise towards the murderers of his father and his mother bear a very near resemblance to Hamlet's. Full of indignity and hatred at such crimes, his sense of moral duty would have urged him on,

with wings, as swift
As meditation, or the thoughts of love,
To sweep to his revenge.

But, surrounded as he was by spies and enemies, he was obliged to be cautious in his proceedings, and to stifle, for a while, the resentment which he could not carry into effect.

It is necessary to consider the character of James, like that of Hamlet, as a whole, rather than scan particular parts and circumstances. And the dying request of Hamlet to Horatio to clear his fame, is equally necessary to clear James, and prevent our censuring

³ In the *Hystorie Geruth*, after the interview with Hamlet, comes into all his plans, and appears to be entirely estranged from her husband. This is not the case in the play. The alteration certainly detracts from the character of the Queen, and renders her attachment to Claudius the more suspicious.

cenfuring his backwardnefs in revenging the murder of his father and his mother :

What a wounded name,
Things ftanding thus unknown, fhall leave behind me.
If thou didft ever hold me in thy heart,
Abfent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harfh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my ftory.

Act 5. S. 2.

There is another *trait* in the character of Hamlet to which I now defire to call the reader's attention : His love of the ftage, and patronage of the players.

“ Guthrie afferts in his History of Scotland, that King James, “ to prove how thoroughly he was emancipated from the tutelage of his clergy, defired Queen Elizabeth in the year 1599 to fend him a company of Englifh comedians. She complied, and James gave them a licence to act in his capital and in his court. I have great reafon to think, (adds the hiftorian) that the immortal Shakspeare was of the number.”

Upon this paffage Mr. Malone makes the following remark :

“ If the writer had any ground for this affertion, why was it not ftated ? It is extremely improbable
that

that Shakspeare should have left London at this period. In 1599 his King Henry V. was produced, and without doubt acted with great applause." Vol. i. P^t. i. p. 356.

It is much to be regretted, that Guthrie did not give his reasons for this supposition. It is however certain, that there was a company of players at Edinburgh in that year, and that James patronized them in a very distinguished manner. Vide *The Ordinances of King James and his Council. Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare MSS.* p. 612, and *An Extract from Spottiswood*, p. 418.

The author of this very able Apology is not accurate in saying that there is no probability in *Mr. Malone's surmise* that King James solicited Queen Elizabeth in 1599 to send a company of English comedians to Edinburgh. (Shaksp. Vol. i. P^t. ii. p. 39.) This is not Mr. Malone's surmise, but given upon the authority, as he himself states, (Part i. p. 356) of a modern historian. Nor do I agree with the apologist, that it is to be collected from Spottiswood that James *did not send* for them. The passage does not, to my mind, give any light on that point, either one way or the other.

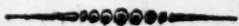
Nor do I agree with Mr. Malone, that Shakspeare's Henry V. being produced in this year is any argument against his being absent from London and in
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Scotland.

Scotland. For two years prior to this, he had produced three plays each year, for three years prior to them, two plays each, and for two years subsequent to this, two plays each year. Vide Chronol. Order, p. 266.

Henry the Fifth being likewise founded on an old play, it would not take so much time and trouble in writing, as one upon an entirely new subject. I consider this circumstance as certainly not weighing against it, and perhaps in favour of this journey. Why should he be less diligent, or bring out fewer plays in this year, than for five years previous, or two years subsequent, but from some such reason? His Henry the Fifth might be acted in the former part of the year, and his Scotch journey take place at the latter end of it. It appears that the players were at Edinburgh in November, and Mr. Malone supposes Henry the Fifth to have been written between April and September 1599. His journey would prevent his bringing out any more plays that year. Very soon after James's arrival in London he accepted the Lord Chamberlain's company as his own, and gave them a licence. Apol. p. 421.

From these evidences, then, it is certain, that James was very fond of the Drama, and patronized the players in a very distinguished manner. It is also certain, that there was a company of English players at Edinburgh in 1599. They were perhaps sent there
by

by Elizabeth at James's desire; or they might come voluntarily to "offer him service;" it is moreover not very improbable that Shakspeare was of the number. However this be, no doubt Hamlet's liberal entertainment of the players was designed as a compliment to James. And, whether this kindness was shewn to himself, his comrades, or any other company, Shakspeare would be pleased with his treatment of them.



I SHALL here hazard a conjecture, (though the FLUELLENITES will perhaps still wear the glove in their caps, and again taunt me with "Macedon and Monmouth,") that Shakspeare, either from his own knowledge, or from the representation of others who had been there, had a perfect idea of Holyrood-house and it's situation, the royal residence of the princes of the country whence he has taken his second story; and that, in drawing his scenery, he had it in mind, though he has not followed it very closely, but given it improvements and *picturesqueness*, which almost every painter does in his landscapes: for his scenery bears a resemblance to Holyrood-house, but none to Elfineur. Mr. Coxe gives the following account of Elfineur in his travels:

"Midway we had a fine view of the two shores,
(of Sweden and Zealand) with the towns of Helsing-
borg

borg and Elfsnoor ; the former crowned by an ancient tower ; the latter distinguished by the palace of Cronborg, a less romantic, but no less beautiful, object. The shores of Sweden to the north of Helsingborg are steep and rocky ; but decrease in height towards the south, and become low and flat. *Those of Zealand consist of ridges of sand.*"

Coxe's Trav. 3^d edit. Vol. i. b. 8. ch. i. p. 304.

" The passage of the sound (of Elfsneur) is guarded by the fortress of Cronborg ; which is situated upon the edge of a peninsular promontory," p. 305.

" The palace of Cronborg, which stands in the fortress, is a square gothic building of free-stone." p. 306.

" Adjoining to a royal palace, which stands about half a mile from Cronborg, is a garden, which our curiosity led us to visit ; as it is called Hamlet's garden ; and is said, by tradition, to be the very spot where the murder of his father was perpetrated. The house is of modern date, and is situated at the foot of a *sandy ridge* near the sea. The garden occupies the side of the hill, and is laid out in *terrasses rising one above another.*" p. '309.

From these passages I collect, that the shore of Zealand, and particularly of Elfsneur, consists of ridges of sand, rising one above another.

That

That the palace of Cronborg, situated within the fortress, being designed as a guard to the passage of the sound, most probably fronts the sea, and therefore fronts the *east*.

And that the other palace and garden, called Hamlet's, is situated on a sandy shore, with terraces rising one above another.

I will now state what is to be collected of the situation of Shakspeare's scene.

The first scene is laid on "a Platform before the Palace in Elfsineur;" Whether the palace of Conborg, or the other, does not appear. Bernardo, the centinel on his post, points to a "star" which is "*westward* from the pole." I conclude therefore that the palace fronts the *west*⁹.

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⁹ It is necessary here to bear in mind, what I think any writer for the stage will allow me, that the Poet, while writing his Drama and describing any place he has seen, bears in his mind the *stage effect* and considers the *picture* it will form in *representation* with the scenery and the performers. If this is allowed me, the situation of the palace, fronting the west, follows of course, as the Poet would consider that his speakers must stand with their backs to the palace and front the audience.

If it be here objected, that Horatio afterwards bids his companions observe,

the

We also gather some particulars relative to the situation from a speech of Horatio. Act. 1. S. 4.

What if it tempt you toward *the flood*, my lord?
Or to the *dreadful summit of the cliff*,
That *beetles o'er his base* into the sea? *

* * * *

The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.

From

the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walk o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill,

I answer, that to observe the appearance of the morn, he must observe it's coming from the east; but that this high eastern hill is Arthur's seat, a very high hill to the S.E. of Holyrood-house.

The King afterwards says, Act 4. S. 1.

The sun no sooner shall the *mountains* touch,
But we will ship him hence.

When the *high hills* about Edinburgh (not the *flat sandy country* about Elfineur) were in his mind.

1 Upon this passage Mr. Capel has made the following remark: "In this speech we have another description, besides that in his 'Lear,' that shews Shakspeare a traveller: the image of a 'cliff' and it's horrors must have been gathered upon the spot, to have enabled him to paint it so excellently; but the description in this place is chaster, less exaggerated than that in the other, and yet sufficiently forcible."

From these passages, it is evident, that Shakspeare has not drawn his scene from any knowledge of the place; and most likely the real situation and scenery about the palace at Elfineur never were the objects of his inquiry. But the palace of Holyrood-house at Edinburgh, the residence of the court, which this hypothesis assumes as the characters of the drama, comes much nearer to it, and was very probably *in his mind* when he drew the scene. It fronts the *west*, and has a *flood* near it, though not the sea: There is water to the S.E. and was, till lately, to the N; and “the dreadful summit of the cliff,” called Salisbury Crags, “which beetles o’er his base, and looks so many fathoms down,” comes nearer to Shakspeare’s description, than the sandy ridges of Elfineur. Upon his not having described Elfineur accurately, I lay no stress; but his so nearly describing the situation of Holyrood-house, surely, is more than accidental?²

² The reader will recollect, that although this play was acted, probably, in 1596, three years prior to the time when Shakspeare or his comrades are supposed to have visited Edinburgh, yet it was not printed till after that period (in 1602), and of the first edition no copy is known to be extant. The earliest edition the commentators have consulted is 1604, which was “newly imprinted, and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.” We do not know, then, but this description may have been an addition to the original play, after the visit to Edinburgh, together with other passages, to make the story bear stronger upon his second design.

IN the last article of p. 34, I have mentioned how greatly the parts, which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern take upon them, resembles that of Dr. Wotton towards James. In addition to what I have there said, I will subjoin a passage from Hamlet, and another from Dr. Robertson, to shew that the *means* by which they were to effect their discoveries were the same :

King.

I entreat you both,

That,—*being* of so young days brought up with him ;

And, since, *so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,—*

That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court

Some little time : *so by your companies*

To draw him on to pleasures ; and to gather,

So much as from occasion you may glean.

Act 2. S. 2.

“ In order to direct/and quicken their motions, she (Queen Elizabeth) dispatched Sir Edward Wotton along with Bellenden into Scotland. This man was gay, well-bred, and entertaining; he excelled in all the exercises for which James had a passion, and amused the young King by relating the adventures he had met with, and the observations he had made during a long residence in foreign countries; but under the veil of these superficial qualities, he concealed a dangerous and intriguing spirit. He soon grew into high favour with James, and while he was seemingly attentive only to pleasure and diversions, he acquired influence over the public councils, to a degree which was indecent for a stranger to possess.” Vol. ii. p. 138.

BUCHANAN

BUCHANAN (p. 191) mentions two prodigies which accompanied the King's (Lord Darnley's) death. One, of a gentleman sick of a fever, who had a supernatural knowledge of the event at the time it was taking place, and died soon after. The other, of an apparition, which appeared to three friends of the Earl of Athol, waked them out of their sleep; and apprized them of the murder.

Something of this kind appears to have been in the Poet's mind, when the soldiers on the watch are speaking of the supernatural appearance of the Ghost of the murdered King, and Horatio says :

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
 Stars shone with trains of fire; dews of blood fell;
 Disasters dimm'd the sun; and the moist star,
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
 Was sick almost to dooms-day with eclipse.
 And even the like precursor of fierce events,—
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen coming on,—
Have Heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Act 1. S. 1.

THE restraint which James's person was often put under by the factious nobles, and the little respect paid to him, appear to be alluded to in the following passages.

Ham. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guild. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison. * * * *to me it is a PRISON.*

* * * I am most dreadfully attended.

Act 2. S. 2.

THE following passage appears to have been dictated by an imagination deeply impressed with such ideas as I impute to our author.

The power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was some time a paradox, but NOW *the TIME gives it PROOF.*

Act 3. S. 1.

IN p. 27. I have quoted the following lines, to prove, that the King was "declining in the vale of years." They may certainly be considered as alluding to his age, but I have my doubts whether Lord Darnley's illness and aversion to Mary, previous to his murder, was not, at the same time, or perhaps exclusively, in the poet's mind.

Pl. Qu.

Pl. Qu. So many journies may the sun and moon
 Make us again count o'er, ere love be done !
 But, woe is me, *you are so sick of late,*
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you, &c.

Pl. K. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too ;
My operant powers their functions leave to do.

Act 3. S. 2.

THE curse, which the Player Queen invokes
 against herself, should she marry again after the death
 of her first husband, is exactly what befell Mary
 on that occasion:

Nor earth to me give food, nor Heaven light !
Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night !
To desperation turn my trust and hope !
 An anchor's cheer in PRISON be my scope !
 Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
 Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !
 Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife.

Act 3. S. 2.

This is not the usual strain of a poet writing from his
 own general ideas, of what a Queen would think to
 be the worst that could befall her. But of an imagi-
 nation fixed to one particular object, and describing
 that. The word *prison* is very remarkable.

THE following extract from the King's celebrated Soliloquy, though very applicable to his situation as Claudius, cannot but strike the reader, as having, at the same time, an intimate connection with that of Bothwell, Mary having been accused of hurrying over his trial, and conducting it so, as to contrive to have him acquitted.

What form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder! —
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded band may shew-by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, *the wicked prize itself*
Buys out the law.

Act 3. S. 3.

THE introduction of the Ghost of Hamlet's Father has ever been considered one of the finest incidents of the sublime. He certainly is introduced in a singular and striking appearance: He is represented as a majestic warrior, clad in complete armour.

What

What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
 Together with that *fair and warlike form*,
 In which the majesty of buried Denmark
 Did *sometime march*?

Such was *the very armour* he had on,
 When he the ambitious Norway combated;
 So *frown'd* he once, &c.

We do it wrong, being so *majestical*, &c.

Act 1. S. 1.

A figure, like your father,
Armed at point, exactly, cap-à-pé,
 Appears before them, and, *with solemn march*,
Goes slow and stately by them.

Act 1. S. 2.

What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, *in complete steel*? &c.

Act 1. S. 4.

MY FATHER, *in his habit as he liv'd*!

Act 3. S. 4.

It is worthy of note, that this is the first of Shakspeare's plays, in which he has introduced a Ghost. His ideas being employed upon a Scotch story, might suggest to him the appearance of a Ghost, and the discovery of the murder by his means; for though the belief in Ghosts was, at that time, not very uncommon in England, yet it was far more prevalent in Scotland; and I have before shewn, that the death of
 Lord

Lord Darnley was not entirely unconnected with supernatural appearances. But farther proofs may be brought to shew, that Lord Darnley was very probably in the Poet's mind when he drew his Ghost.

The author of "Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark." Octavo, 1736. gives the following reasons for Shakspeare's putting his Ghost into armour:

"We are to consider, that he could introduce him in these dresses only; in his regal dress, in a habit of interment, in a common habit, or in some fantastic one of his own invention. Now let us examine, which was most likely to affect the spectators with passions proper on the occasion. —

"The regal habit has nothing uncommon in it, nor surprising, nor could it give rise to any fine images. The habit of interment was something too horrible; for terror, not horror is to be raised in the spectators. The common habit (or *Habit de ville*, as the French call it,) was by no means proper for the occasion. It remains then that the Poet should choose some habit from his own brain: but this certainly could not be proper, because invention in such a case would be so much in danger of falling into the grotesque, that it was not to be hazarded.

"Now

“ Now as to the armour, it was very suitable to a King who is described as a great warrior, and is very particular; and consequently affects the spectators without being fantastic.”—

Malone, Vol. ix. p. 435.

All this is plausible, yet I see no particular objection to any of the dresses the author of the Remarks has here enumerated. I see no reason why a regal habit is not as uncommon and surprizing as armour, and as capable of giving occasion for fine images: witness the regal spectres in Macbeth, and the Ghost of Henry the Sixth in Richard the Third: the *majesty* of the Ghost is a circumstance upon which the Poet lays great stress. The habit of interment, he could not object to, as Juliet appears in one. He has introduced many Ghosts, in Richard the Third, in their common habits, as I suppose; and, therefore, would not think them improper for this Ghost: the Ghost of Cæsar must wear a common Roman, or a Dictator's habit: Banquo likewise appears in his common habit. I certainly see no reason for introducing him in a grotesque habit; as Ghosts, I suppose, generally appear in some one of the dresses, which they were accustomed to wear before they had shuffled off their mortal coil, or in their winding-sheet. He most probably, then, had particular motives for introducing the Ghost in this manner; I imagine the better to portray Lord Darnley.

He was of a more than common stature, being seven feet high,³ *of a fair and warlike form*, and certainly had a very remarkable suit of armour. Randolph (the English minister) in his letter to Cecil, September 3, 1565, giving an account of Murray's rebellion against his Sovereign, says "she (the Queen) weareth a pistol charged when in the field; and *of all her troops her husband only has gilt armour.*" Tytler, Vol. i. p. 376.

I cannot quit this subject without noticing the tradition of our Poet himself playing the part of the Ghost. The Ghost is undoubtedly the second male character in the play, and accordingly is given now to the second performer on the stage. To give the character it's full force requires first rate abilities, besides grandeur of figure and elegance of action. Yet it does not appear, that Shakspeare, in general, acted parts of so much importance. We imagine that he played Adam in "As you like it," and perhaps Duncan, Henry the Fourth and Henry the Sixth.

If

³ Beneath the ruins (of Holyrood Abby) lie the bodies of James the Second and James the Fifth, Henry Darnley and several other persons of rank: and the inscriptions on several of their tombs are preserved by Maitland. A gentleman informed me, that some years ago he had seen the remains of the bodies, but in a very decayed state; the beards remained on some; and that the bones of Henry Darnley proved their owner, by their great size, for he was said to be seven feet high.

Pennant's Tour into Scotland, 3d Edit. p. 55:

If he was the consummate actor to top this part, it is a wonder we have not fuller accounts of his excellence; if he was not, doubtless there was some other reason for his thus stepping out of his usual line: he would not play the character, if unfit for it both in his natural and acquired parts. He must then have possessed the "fair and warlike form," the "majesty," the awful "frown,"

the grace "seated on his brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury, &c."

Surely it is not straining matters too far to think, that, if Shakspeare had not possessed all, or at least some, of these qualities, he would not have represented the character? Hence we may form some idea of his personal accomplishments.



HERE I close my additional proofs. Like my former, some of them are very striking, some less so; yet they mutually aid each other, and form to me an irresistible evidence, that Mary Queen of Scots, and her story, were in the Poet's mind when he wrote this Tragedy. If this is granted me, the question then turns only on the innocence or guilt of the Queen. If she is represented as *innocent*, the play is an indirect *apology*; if GUILTY an indirect CENSURE.

I shall conclude with the same question to my readers, which the Centinels put to Horatio after he had seen the Ghost, having before doubted the truth of their relation :

Is not this something more than phantasy?

What think you of it?

IS IT NOT LIKE THE KING?

I flatter myself, that I shall be answered by many, making allowances for some inconsistencies in the story, and for the difference which casual circumstances make in a man's appearance at different times:

AS THOU ART TO THYSELF!



NUMBER

N U M B E R I I I .

CONTAINING

*AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS BROUGHT
AGAINST Dr. WARBURTON'S HYPOTHESIS*

RESPECTING

*AN ALLUSION TO MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS
IN THE CELEBRATED PASSAGE IN THE
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.*

I WAS not aware, when I first published my
OBSERVATIONS, that any objections had ever
been made to Dr. Warburton's hypothesis, that Mary
Queen of Scots was alluded to, under the figure of a
mermaid, in the celebrated passage in the Midsummer
Night's Dream. I now find, upon looking into Mr.
Steevens' edition of 1793, that an article, to disprove
the justness of it, was inserted in the Edinburgh
Magazine for November 1786; and there are also
notes for the same purpose by Mr. Steevens and Mr.
Ritson.

Ritson. (Vol. v. p. 54. 172.) I have been favoured, moreover, with some remarks upon this subject by a friend, part of which I shall take the liberty to insert hereafter, as it contains an objection not given in the other notes, and which is, I think, a good one, though capable of being answered.

As I have given Dr. Warburton's note in my *OBSERVATIONS*, and in some measure connected it with my hypothesis, it is not entirely irrelevant to my subject to consider the objections to it in this place. At any rate, it is an object of critical curiosity.

I consider it a circumstance by no means trifling in favour of this hypothesis, that, from the year 1747 (when Dr. Warburton's edition of Shakspeare was published) to 1786, a period of near forty years, no objection to it was ever made. Yet, during that time, it passed through the critical hands of Johnson, Steevens, Reed and Malone, and was inserted by them in their editions of Shakspeare, without being controverted; not to mention the silent acquiescence of other commentators, who, had they thought it absurd, should have stated their objections.

Mr. Edwards, in his "Canons of Criticism," objects, it is true, to two of Dr. Warburton's observations,
but

but not to the hypothesis itself.¹ Mr. Steevens certainly acquiesced in it till very lately, for the head of Mary Queen of Scots was inserted in Harding's "Shakspeare Illustrated," at his desire, as she was alluded to in this passage.

I by no means consider Dr. Warburton's having failed in his explanation of certain parts, as an objection to the whole; he may have discovered, and given, the general scope of the allegory, and yet have failed in pointing out particular passages and allusions; and though some of his explanations should be false, others

CANON XXIII.

¹ EXAMP. II. — "she (Mary Queen of Scots) is called a *Mermaid*, to denote — her beauty and *intemperate lust*."

————— "Ut turpiter atrum
Definat in piscem mulier formosa superne."

Which those who do not understand Latin, will perhaps think, is a proof of what our critic asserts; or at least something to his purpose.

EXAMP. 12. "The Emperor Julian tells us, Epist. 41. that the Sirens — contended for precedency with the muses, who overcoming them, took away their *wings*. The quarrels between Mary and Elizabeth had *the same cause*, and *the same issue*." Warburton.

Not to take notice of the sameness of the *cause*; if what Mr. Warburton says of the *issue* be true, then *heads* and *wings* are the *same*; for Queen Mary lost her *head*.

others may be given which are right ; this I shall at least attempt to shew. I confess, however, for my own part, that I should have no objection to suffering Dr. Warburton's note to remain unaltered, as it has been printed hitherto in all the subsequent editions of Shakspeare.

I have my doubts, whether it is fair to judge Shakspeare by the rigid laws of learned criticism: especially a play, which abounds, like the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, with scenes of the boldest and most beautiful fiction; and will not, therefore, bear that very minute investigation given to this passage. Such rules may be applied with greater justice to modern poetry, where a cold correctness has superseded those daring flights of imagination, which are the characteristics of true ancient poetry. Allegories are seldom correct throughout, consisting, for the most part, in a few striking and general resemblances, rather than in many minute ones: Satire and panegyric especially are rarely true in every particular. I shall, however, state the objections, and the answers which I think may be given to them.

It seems to be acknowledged by all parties, that *Queen Elizabeth* is characterized by the *Vestal*. Any one who recognizes this image, surely, may follow the Poet into the remotest and boldest regions of fiction? And the action of the mermaid being laid in very time and place with Cupid's attack upon the
Vestal,

Vestal, it is natural to suppose, that the Mermaid stands for some eminent personage of her time. Who was so eminent, and who so likely to be mentioned at the same time with Elizabeth, as her rival Mary Queen of Scots? The mixture of *satire* with the panegyric, which Dr. Warburton mentions, seems to be doubtful, as the Mermaid was not always an emblem of licentiousness. If so, the allusion remains as a compliment only. How far Shakspeare was *politic* in this, is not necessary to inquire: If he has alluded to her in a complimentary strain, our concern is with the fact, not with the motive. This play was one of his earliest productions; written, perhaps, before he had attained any great literary character, and whilst he looked upon himself as an obscure Dramatist, at liberty to write according to his own opinions²: when he afterwards became a court-poet, he might write in a different strain to please his royal patron. If, however, by calling Mary a Mermaid, Shakspeare designed to cast a censure upon her,³ it is an allusion with which Elizabeth would not be displeased.

According

² Shakspeare was not noticed at court at this period, and probably not for some time after. (Apol. parag. begin. p. 63.)

³ In "King Lear," Shakspeare has described abandoned women, as having the upper parts human, and the lower (animal or) bestial:

Down

According to Minshieu and Ainsworth, Mermaids and Sirens are the same; such likewise was Shakspeare's notion,⁴ though Mr. Ritson seems to think not⁵. And, by referring to the article *Sirens* in Lempriere's Classical Dictionary, a pretty full account of them may be seen, which will shew what Dr. Warburton says respecting them, not to have been advanced without reason⁶.

Mary

Down from the waist they are centaurs,
Though women all above:
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiend's.

Act 4. S. 6.

⁴ O, train me not, sweet *Mermaid*, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears;
Sing, *Siren*, for thyself, and I will dote.

Comedy of Errors, Act 3. S. 2.

Mr. Steevens remarks in a note, that:

Mermaid,] is only another name for *Siren*.

⁵ "Can any thing be more ridiculous? (than what Dr. Warburton says respecting the Sirens, which he also calls Mermaids.) *Mermaids* are half women and half *fishes*: where then are their wings? Or what possible use could they make of them if they had any? The *Sirens* which Julian speaks of were partly women and partly *birds*."

⁶ Two passages in this account are worthy of notice:

"The Sirens were informed by the oracle, that as soon as any person passed by them without suffering themselves to be charmed by their songs, they should perish."

The

Mary may then be called a Mermaid, to denote her reign over a kingdom situate in the sea, or (to make a difference between her and the Vestal, as Elizabeth was, in that respect, [as Mr. Ritson observes] as much a Mermaid as herself) because she came over the sea, in her passage from France to Scotland, and therefore may be called a sea-nymph, charming the rude sea, and making the stars shoot from their spheres by her music.

————— on a dolphin's back,] It is next objected, that "placing the Mermaid on the back of a Dolphin, is a strange allegory to figure the union in marriage of Mary with the Dauphin of France."

Mr. Whiter (in his *Attempt*, p. 185,) supposes this imagery to have been borrowed from some masque or pageant, which had been represented before Elizabeth
to

The rebel nobles and Elizabeth, "like the deaf adder, refused to hear the voice of the charmer," and Mary perished in an untimely manner.

"Some authors say, that the Sirens challenged the Muses to a trial of skill in singing, and that the latter proved victorious, and plucked the feathers from the wings of their adversaries, with which they made themselves crowns."

Thus Elizabeth, having Mary in her power, took away her life; by which she strengthened her power to retain the crown of England, for which Mary was her competitor.

According to Ovid, the Sirens had the faces of women but the bodies of flying fish.

to compliment her at the expense of her rival; and that "*a dolphin bearing a finger on his back*," was not uncommon in these spectacles.⁷ If so, the contriver of

⁷ The reader who is acquainted with the account of "The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth," published by Mr. Nichols, will recollect, that the Mermaid and Dolphin were figures frequently introduced, not only in the pageants and spectacles, but also in the ornaments of plate and jewelry, and even in the confections at the entertainments of those times.

In Twelfth Night, Act 1. S. 2. Sebastian on the wreck of a ship, is compared to Arion on a dolphin's back:

I saw your brother,
Most provident in peril, bind himself
(Courage and hope both teaching him the practice)
To a strong mast, that liv'd upon the sea;
Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves.

In Antony and Cleopatra the idea of a mermaid and a ship are connected:

Her gentlewomen, like the *Nereides*,
So many *Mermaids*, tended her i'the eyes,
And made their bends adornings: at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers.

Act 2. S. 2.

Shakspeare seems to have thought Sirens, Mermaids and Nereides the same. The Nereides were represented as young and handsome virgins, and had the power of calming the waters.

Possibly a mermaid might be the figure at the head of the vessel which brought Mary back from France.

of the pageant, not the Poet, is answerable for the improper or ludicrous imagery, which he found already struck out, and in which the sea animal having the same name with the Mermaid's husband he might think a happy coincidence. Nor is it necessary, as it strikes me, for the *literal meaning* to be *the Queen placed upon the BACK of her husband*. The word *back* might suggest to the Poet merely the idea of her being united to him, or *backing him*, i.e. their interests strengthening (or seconding, or supporting) each other by their union. We might, I think, with equal propriety, object to his placing his *Vestal Virgin* upon a *throne*. As genius and critical exactness are, in many respects, discordant qualities, we are not always to look for them together. I believe that a Poet often writes many a fine passage, without having very determinate ideas respecting it in his own mind; though, at the same time, he would not write, and is assured it is not, nonsense.*

A Crown

* A remarkable instance of this is told of Dr. Goldsmith. He was asked what he meant by *slow*, the last word of the first line of "The Traveller,"

" Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow."

Did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, "Yes." Dr. Johnson was sitting by, and said, "No, sir; you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude." Goldsmith did not deny this to be his meaning.

Boswell's Life of Johnson, Vol. iii. p. 34.

A *Crown on the back of a Dolphin* (called the Crown and Dolphin) is, at this time, not an uncommon sign at public houses. Signs generally originate from some popular circumstance of the day; but whence a crown and dolphin came to be associated, I know not: an explanation of this might throw farther light on Shakspeare's image⁹.

— the

⁹ The Dauphin of France, husband to Mary, had the crown-matrimonial of Scotland conferred upon him.

A dolphin hauriant, in a field azure, borne quarterly with the three *Flowers de Lis*, is the armourial bearing of the Dauphin of France. His crest is two dolphins resting upon a crown.

What was before conjectured concerning the mermaid, may be repeated respecting the dolphin; it might be the figure at the head of the galley which brought Mary over, as having belonged to her late husband, while Dauphin; or the dolphin might be painted on one of the flags.

I know not what connection there is between Arion and the Dolphin and the Bible: but Sebastian Castalio's Latin Translation of the Bible, printed at Basle in Switzerland in 1551, and dedicated to Edward VI. has a wooden cut of Arion on the back of a Dolphin, playing on a harp, in the title-page.

In the frontispiece to Holishead's *Chronicles*, 1577, a mermaid is one of the figures. I cannot find from any books of heraldry, or from any old prints I have met with, that the Mermaid and Dolphin were ever joined together, or that the Mermaid was ever placed upon the Dolphin's back; and she certainly (as Mr. Ritson observes) would "have but a strangely awkward seat on the back of a Dolphin," not being made with hams, and unadapted to a fitting

——the rude sea grew civil at her song;] Mr. Ritson objects to Dr. Warburton's explanation of the *rude sea* by *Scotland incircled with the ocean*, i.e. as he understands it literally, an *island*. And "as to the disorders of that country being quieted by the Queen's return, it appears from history to be full as peaceable before as it is at any time after that event."——
 "if the enchanting song of the commentator's mermaid civilized the rude sea for a time, it was only to render it, in an instant, more boisterous than ever." Scotland, it is true, is not intirely furrounded by the sea; but it is nearly so; and, by poetic licence, may be called incircled: It is a peninsula, though not an island: though not incircled by the *sea*, it is furrounded by *water*; Scotland is not to be entered any way, but by crossing a river.

I do not, however, imagine, that this was the Poet's meaning by *the rude sea*. Shakspeare was well read in the Bible. He has made many allusions to it, and from it taken many of his expreffions. He would there find *strife* compared to *water let out*,¹ and the
noise

fitting posture. But as the position is "the poet's affair, and not the commentator's," we must take the image as we find it, and guess at the poet's meaning; and, the more uncouth the real picture; when considered as an allegory, the more probable it is, that he had some particular reason for thus disposing of his Mermaid.

¹ The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water.
 Prov. xvii. 14.

*noise and rushing of many people or nations to the noise and rushing of mighty waters.*² It is most probable, therefore, by the rude sea, that he meant the rebellious subjects of Mary, who rose up in arms against the Regent, while she was in France; and it's *growing civil at her song*, was the temporary calm, which her affability occasioned on her return. For this calm we have Dr. Robertson's authority,³ founded on that of credible historians; and it is the nature of panegyric to enumerate the circumstance which redound to the honour alone, and to suppress those which are unfavourable to the object to whom it is addressed: the subsequent commotion of this sea, therefore, is not hinted at.

And certain stars, &c.]

My friend, whose remarks I before mentioned, has the following observations on this passage: "The *sea's growing civil* is made coeval in time with *the stars*

² Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas! and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off. Isaiah xvii. 12, 13.

See also Psalm lxxv. 7. and Rev. xiv. 2. & xix. 6.

³ Vol. i p. 275, 276, 277. and 292. 14th Edit. See also Hume's account of Mary's return to Scotland, Vol. iv. ch. 1. p. 433, quarto Edition.

stars shooting from their spheres, both of these effects being attributed to the same cause, viz. the Mermaid's harmonious song: Yet Dr. Warburton explains the former effect as an allusion to the early part of Mary's life, and the latter as an allusion to what passed almost at the close of it, the unfortunate attachment of some of the English nobles to her interest. Moreover, the figure is not just, if by the 'stars shooting madly from their spheres to hear the sea-maid's music,' the Poet alluded to the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland and more particularly to the Duke of Norfolk, whose projected marriage with Mary was his ruin. For Shakspeare is more consistent in his figures than to have represented the aspiring pretensions of a nobleman to marry a Queen, by the image of a star *shooting* or *falling* from it's sphere."

I see no reason for objecting to Dr. Warburton's explanation, because the Nobles' pretensions to Mary were *aspiring*, and therefore could not be represented by *stars shooting* or *falling*, from their spheres. A *Nobleman* may justly be represented by a *star*, it being one of the insignia of nobility⁴; and, if the stars did
actually

⁴ Shakspeare has in "Timon of Athens," Act 5. S. 1. the idea of a *star* connected with *nobility*:

Poet—to Timon— You!

Whose *star-like nobleness* gave life and influence
To their whole being.

K

And

actually shoot FROM *their spheres*, (i.e. leave their station for another, whether higher or lower,) is it not sufficient for the allegory? Shakspeare, perhaps, was not enough of an astronomer, or even of an observer of that part of nature, to know, that stars *never shoot upwards*. In Hamlet he has the image of stars leaving their spheres, unconnected with the idea of falling :

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres.

Act 1. S. 5.

Besides, may not the stars allude to the Archduke Charles, Don Carlos of Spain, and the Duke of Anjou, all *foreign* Princes? and their shooting from their spheres may mean, their seeking an alliance with a *foreign* Princess. If we apply the image to these Princes, it removes the objection respecting the "stars shooting from their spheres being coeval with the rude sea's growing civil at her song;" as these events happened about the same time. The Earls of Arran, Leicester, Darnley and Bothwell, also, at this time
(of

And again in "All's well that ends well," Act 1. S. 1. with the additional circumstance of *marriage*:

there is no living, none,

If Bertram be away. It were all one,
As I should love a bright particular *star*,
And think to *wed* it, he is so above me:
In his *bright radiance* and collateral *light*
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.

(of whom the Earls of Leicester and Darnley were subjects of the Queen of *England*) “shot madly from their spheres to hear this sea-maid’s music.” This is also coeval with Cupid’s attack upon the Vestal with his love-shaft, by which I understand the accomplishments of the Earl of Leicester, which might have *pierced an hundred thousand hearts*, and certainly made some impression upon Elizabeth, though she never received him professedly as a lover, but remained in MAIDEN MEDITATION, *fancy-free*. But, if we admit this as an allusion to the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland and the Duke of Norfolk, (and I see no reason why we should not, for Shakspeare certainly never paid any scrupulous attention to chronology—much less then should we expect it in this allegorical flight of fancy,) these, by deserting their allegiance to Elizabeth and joining Mary, might be said to have *shot*, or FALLEN, *from their spheres*; and then this attack of Cupid’s may allude to the partiality which Elizabeth entertained for the Earl of Essex.

Having considered the objections brought against Dr. Warburton’s explanation of this allegory, and endeavoured to remove them.—I will re-state it, divested of controversy, in that manner, in which it appears to me to be perfectly reasonable and satisfactory.

Thou remember'st, &c.]

The first thing observable on these words, is, that this action of the *Mermaid* is laid in the very time and place with Cupid's attack upon the *Vestal*. It is acknowledged by every one, that the *fair Vestal, throned in the west*, is designed as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth; and the *love-shaft*, which Cupid loosed *smartly from his bow, as it should pierce an hundred thousand hearts*, most probably alludes to the impression made upon the heart of Elizabeth by the accomplishments of the Earls of Leicester and Essex; but which, as she never professedly received them as lovers, were not efficacious, and therefore she *passed on, in maiden meditation, fancy-free*. Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton were likewise amongst the number of this Vestal's admirers. As the *Vestal*, then, stands for *Elizabeth*, it is natural and reasonable to think, that the *Mermaid* stands for some eminent personage of her time. Who was so eminent, and who so likely to be mentioned at the same time with Elizabeth, as *Mary Queen of Scots*? And the Poet has so well marked out every distinguished circumstance of her life and character in this beautiful allegory, as will leave no room to doubt about his second meaning. The different characters of the two are plainly marked out. Elizabeth is called a *Vestal*; and, though Cupid looses his love-shaft at her, she passes on in maiden meditation, fancy-free, as that Princess remained unmarried

married during her whole life: the appellation of *A maiden Queen* was the title which she assumed to herself. Mary is represented as a *Mermaid*, luring others to destruction by her dulcet and harmonious breath. She is called a *Mermaid*, 1. To denote her reign over a kingdom situate in the sea; or, perhaps, because she came over the sea, in her passage from France to take possession of her maritime throne, when she charmed the sea, and caused the stars to shoot from their spheres to listen to her music; and 2. Her beauty; and, perhaps, an allusion is designed to the gallantry with which her enemies accused her; Mermaids, according to some authors, being profligate and abandoned women. If this allusion is designed, there is a mixture of satire with the panegyric; if not, the whole remains as a compliment. How far Shakspeare was politic in this, is not necessary to inquire. The fact, not the motive, or policy of the thing, is that with which we are concerned. This play was one of his earliest production; written, perhaps, before he had attained any great literary character, and when he looked upon himself as an obscure Dramatist, at liberty to write according to his own opinions: when he afterwards became a court-poet, he might write in a different strain to please his royal patron. If, however, by calling Mary a Mermaid, he designed to cast a censure upon her, Elizabeth would not be displeased. 3. An ancient story may possibly be here alluded to. The Emperor Julian tells us, Epist. 41. that the Sirens (which, with all the

the modern Poets, are Mermaids) contended for precedence with the Muses, who overcoming them, took away their wings, with which they made themselves crowns. The quarrels between Mary and Elizabeth had the same cause and the same issue, i.e. Mary was her competitor for the crown of England, and Elizabeth, though in possession of it, being jealous of Mary's superior beauty, accomplishments and influence, having her in her power, took away her life; by which she strengthened her own power to retain the crown.

————— on a *dolphin's back*,] This evidently marks out that distinguishing circumstance of Mary's fortune, her marriage with the Dauphin (formerly spelt Dolphin⁵) of France, son of Henry II. by which union she might be said to be *backing* her husband; or they were seconding, or supporting, each other's interest.⁶ A dolphin bearing a finger on his back, was

⁵ Shakspeare has played upon these words himself:

Messeng. My lord, my lord, the French have gather'd head:
The *Dauphin*, with one Joan la Pucelle join'd,—

* * * *

Talbot. Pucelle or puzzle, *Dolphin* or dog-fish.

Hen. VI. P^t. I. Act I. S. 4

⁶ The dolphin was sometimes considered as an emblem of mildness and humanity. Taking it in this allegorical sense, on a *dolphin's*

was not uncommon in the pageants of those days; and Shakspeare, perhaps, borrowed his imagery from one of these, which might have been represented before Elizabeth to compliment her at the expence of her rival. *A Crown on the back of a Dolphin* (called the Crown and Dolphin) is, at this time, not an uncommon sign at public houses. Signs generally originate from some popular circumstance of the day; but whence a crown and dolphin came to be associated, I know not: an explanation of this might throw farther light on Shakspeare's image.

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,] This alludes to her affability, besides her great abilities of genius and learning, which rendered her the most accomplished Princess of her age. The French writers tell us, that, while she was in that court, she pronounced a Latin oration in the great hall of the Louvre, with so much grace and eloquence, as filled the whole court with admiration. Mary had likewise great taste in *music*, and *sung* and played upon the lute with uncommon skill⁷.

That the rude sea grew civil at her song;] By the *rude sea* is meant the rebellious subjects of Mary, and the

dolphin's back would signify, that the mermaid, by her mildness and humanity, aided by her accomplishments, charmed the sea.

⁷ Robertson, Vol. ii. p. 182.

the commotion in which she found her kingdom on her return from France. Shakspeare was well read in the Bible. He has made many allusions to it, and from it taken many of his expressions. He would there find *strife* compared to *water let out*, (Prov. xvii. 14.) and *the noise and rushing of many people or nations* to the *noise and rushing of mighty waters*, (Isaiah xvii. 12, 13.) The Scots rose in arms against the Regent, while the Queen was in France; but the courteous affability of Mary, her personal charms and accomplishments, her abilities of genius and learning, the elegance of her court, and the gentleness of her administration, mitigated, in some degree, the turbulent ferocity of the Nobles, and accustomed them to greater mildness and humanity; while, at the same time, her presence and authority were a check to their factious and tumultuary spirit, and quieted these disorders:

Cantat, et æquoreas carmine mulcet aquas:

Unfortunately this calm lasted but a short time*. By

—— certain

* To those who acknowledge the justness of the doctrine of the association of ideas, I will here hazard a remark, which I myself consider as much in favour of Dr. Warburton's hypothesis. This speech of Oberon, in which he is giving his directions to Puck, ends with

—— be

— *certain stars shot madly from their spheres*

To hear the sea-maid's music.] is meant the many Nobles who aspired to the love of Mary. A *star*, being one of the insignia of Nobility, is very properly put to characterise the *Nobles*. Those who sought an alliance with Mary were the Archduke Charles, Don Carlos of Spain, and the Duke of Anjou, all foreigners; besides the Earls of Arran, Leicester, Darnley, and Bothwell; of whom the Earls of Leicester and Darnley were subjects to the Queen of England. It may also apply to all those who espoused her cause: particularly the Duke of Norfolk, whose projected marriage with her was attended with such fatal consequences, at a later period; and the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, who fell in her quarrel, and by deserting their allegiance to Elizabeth, and joining Mary, might be said to have *shot*, or *FALLEN*, *from their spheres*.

Thus

— — — — — be thou here again
Ere *the leviathan* can swim a league.

The mention of the leviathan, or whale, an inhabitant of the northern seas, I consider to have been suggested to his imagination from having before employed it upon those rude seas, while allegorizing Mary Queen of Scots and her history under the figure of a Mermaid. The reader will observe in other passages of this scene, that the Poet's imagination was very much impressed with images taken from the sea and its accompaniments.

L

Thus concludes the description, with that remarkable circumstance of this unhappy Lady's fate, the destruction she brought upon those, whom she drew in to support her cause. This, in the boldest expression of the sublime, the Poet images by *certain stars shooting madly from their spheres*. And here again the reader may observe a peculiar justness in the imagery. The vulgar opinion being, that the Mermaid allured men to destruction by her songs. To which opinion Shakspeare alludes in his comedy of Errors :

"O train me not, sweet Mermaid, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears."

On the whole, it is one of the noblest and justest allegories that was ever written. The laying it in *fairy-land*, and out of nature, or in the regions of fancy, is in the character of the speaker. And on these

° And again:

Ant. S.—speaking of Luciana—

Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself:
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the Mermaid's song.

Act 3. S. 2.

See also Hen. VI. Pt. 3. Act 3. S. 2.

I'll drown more failors than the Mermaid shall.

these occasions Shakspeare always excels himself. He is borne away by the magic of his enthusiasm, and hurries his reader along with him into these ancient regions of poetry, by that power of verse, which we may well fancy to be like what:

“ ———— *olim Fauni Vatesque caneant.*”



I CANNOT close my Appendix without saying a word or two upon the late Lord Orford's hypothesis, that the Winter's Tale was designed as an indirect apology for Anne Boleyn. The first intimation of this was given in his Historic Doubts, published in 1767. It was then inserted as a note in Johnson's and Steevens' Shakspeare of 1773, and continued in succeeding editions, without any objections being made to it. Mr. Malone has since refuted one of Lord Orford's arguments in favour of it, yet still acknowledges the extreme probability of the hypothesis; and Mr. Steevens has inserted it in his edition of 1793, without any comment. Their silence I understood as assent; and this was my meaning, when, in my OBSERVATIONS, (p. 16.) I said that “no one refuses to acknowledge” that Shakspeare designed his Winter's Tale as an indirect apology for Anne Boleyn. This expression has been objected to, as if I meant by it, that *every body* assented to it. It is scarce possible to imagine, that I should take upon me
to

to answer for the opinions of the world at large, so various and so variable as they are. My meaning was to speak (and I did not think it would be mistaken) of those critics only, who had expressly given their assent to it; or, by their silence, implied they had nothing to object.

I now find from Mr. Malone's "Emendations and Additions," (Vol. i. P^t. 2. p. 286.) which I had not read, from the first publication of his edition of Shakspeare in 1790, till after my "Observations" were printed, that he ascribed the Winter's Tale to the year 1613, a later date than (1604) that to which, in my "Observations," p. 36, I have, as on his authority, ascribed it. Strong as his arguments are for fixing it to that year, it appears unlikely, that he should have written a play, at that period, for the purpose we suppose. And, if it is intended as an apology for Anne Boleyn, it must have been written, in all probability, at least in part, during the life of Elizabeth. Had he begun it, at that time, as a compliment to her, her death would put an end to his original motive for writing it, and he might lay the play by, in it's unfinished state, till some circumstance or other (perhaps it being easier to finish that play, than write a new one) might induce him to complete it.

There is good reason to believe now, that the Winter's Tale was first exhibited either in 1610 or
1611,

1611, but most probably in the latter of these two years, and that it certainly was not performed before. The alteration of the date of this play certainly diminishes the probability of Lord Orford's hypothesis. Yet I cannot but say, that that play still appears to me to bear evident marks of Shakspeare's having had Anne Boleyn in his mind when he wrote it. But, whether it is so or not, neither the fallacy of Dr. Warburton's, nor of Lord Orford's hypotheses, will overturn mine. They are independent of each other; yet, if any, or all, are true, each gives the other it's support, as it is a style of writing, which, being once adopted, an author is more likely to continue.



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